

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE-WORKING GROUP  
51<sup>st</sup> MEETING**

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**WHO, Headquarters, Geneva  
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**Agenda Item: IDPs: Update on the work of the IDP Unit**

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**The Protection Survey**

A Joint Initiative of the OCHA Unit on Internal Displacement and the  
Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement

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**I. Introduction**

A major policy and advocacy objective of both the Unit on Internal Displacement and the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons (RSG) is to promote improved protection for internally displaced persons. Since his appointment in 1992, the RSG has sought to promote greater protection for internally displaced persons in the field and in particular has developed the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to guide the activities of those working with the internally displaced. In addition, the Office of the RSG played an instrumental role in promoting the development of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Protection Policy that has become the basis for inter-agency protection work. The Unit, operational since January 2002, advises and supports the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) in discharging his responsibility to coordinate an effective operational response to the needs of the displaced. Soon after its formation in 2002, the Unit established a Protection Coalition, comprising representatives of UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement, and drew up plans for the Protection Survey which, it is hoped, will serve to increase awareness of the challenges inherent in providing international protection to the internally displaced and provide direction for ways to improve effectiveness of the international response at the field level.

The Protection Survey is a joint project of the Unit and the Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, which supports the mandate of the RSG. The conceptual framework for the survey is the above-mentioned IASC Protection Policy as well as the Supplementary Guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators on their responsibilities in relation to internally displaced persons, adopted by the IASC in March 2000. An advocacy campaign will be integrated and built around the results of the Protection Survey. For both the Unit and the RSG, advocacy is one mechanism among many to achieve the wider objective of improving the international response for the internally displaced and increasing awareness of their needs. At the institutional level, advocacy encompasses activities undertaken in collaboration with close partners to promote improved response to the needs of the displaced. In an institutional context, advocacy is closely related to policy development and joint action.

## II. The Protection Survey

Protection is widely understood to be the biggest gap facing the internally displaced. While there is increasing attention to protection issues in current humanitarian discourse, there nonetheless remains a need for an overview of existing protection approaches/arrangements with a view to identifying those which work effectively and which might be usefully emulated elsewhere. There is also a need to gain a greater understanding of the problems that impede protection efforts and the ways in which these might be overcome.

### A. Methodology

Through a combination of questionnaires (to be undertaken within the context of a separate and complementary mapping exercise by the Unit) and field visits/interviews in a select number of countries (see below) and appropriate desk studies, the Survey will examine the way in which UN country teams and other relevant actors seek to provide protection to internally displaced persons within two main contexts, specifically:

- Situations defined as complex emergencies, in which an HC is normally designated by the ERC, in consultation with the IASC, as the responsible and accountable official for ensuring that the assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced are addressed, whether or not he/she is also serving as the RC.
- Situations which are not defined as complex emergencies and where the RC is the responsible official.

It should be noted that in either of these contexts, responsibility for the displaced may also reside with the country director of a lead-agency, designated as such by the Secretary-General, or an *ad hoc* mechanism such as in Afghanistan where the humanitarian response is coordinated by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Within these two different contexts, the Survey will undertake a detailed examination in a number of countries of the roles of different UN and non-UN actors in establishing and implementing an “effective protection relationship” which is defined as comprising a number of different elements, each of which will be examined in the different countries visited. These elements are:

**(1) Coordination** – specifically how does coordination on protection issues work when there is an HC or an RC or other designated official, such as the country director of a lead agency? What are the incentives that promote effective protection and what are the obstacles which weaken effective protection? Drawing upon the recent study on humanitarian coordination undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute, it is useful to consider coordination from institutional, structural and management points of view.<sup>1</sup>

- Institutional variables which influence coordination are the characteristics of organizations themselves such as their capacity, including experience of personnel, to undertake protection work; the clarity of their mandate/terms of reference vis-à-vis protection; their level of access in the country and funding; and the extent and nature of their interaction with other relevant actors or protection allies (see below).
- Structural variables concern the existence of protection systems in a given country, such as the designation of a focal point or catalyst agency on protection and the establishment of forums or mechanisms to facilitate coordination on protection issues, including the existence of working groups dedicated to the protection of the displaced or thematic working groups in which protection concerns are addressed; the existence of information sharing forums/systems and of policy instruments and strategies and their continued development reflecting new challenges in a given country.

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<sup>1</sup> See N. Reindrop and P. Wiles, *Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience*, Overseas Development Institute (June 2001).

- Management variables concern issues of leadership which contribute to effective protection, including communication of common purpose, information sharing, consultation and transparency, and the attitude and perception of the displaced.

**(2) Protection Allies** – Specifically, what is the potential or actual role played by other relevant actors, notably national and international NGOs, peacekeeping troops (regional and UN), UN political and peace-building missions, regional organizations, special rapporteurs of the UN Commission on Human Rights, civil society groups such as religious organizations, lawyers groups, national human rights institutions, the media, human rights defenders; as well as the internally displaced themselves and appropriate national and local authorities.

**(3) Headquarters Support** – Specifically, whether field based staff, including the HC/RC or other designated senior official, have the support and advice of headquarters and the quality/effectiveness of that support.

**(4) Donor Policy** – Specifically the impact of donor policy and action at both international level and at the country level, in particular whether donors are coordinated, cohesive and vocal in their position with the Government of a given country.

## B. Country Selection

Bearing these different elements in mind, and conscious also of the need to reflect a cross-section of displacement situations (emerging/ongoing/return) where the protection concerns and the responses thereto will be different, as well as the need also to reflect a regional balance or different continental settings, the following countries have been chosen for field visits by the Survey team:

DISPLACEMENT CONTEXT	COUNTRY	REGION	DISPLACEMENT SITUATION			PROTECTION ALLIES*			
			Emerging/ Forgotten	Ongoing	Return	Peace-keepers	DPA	Reg. Orgs with Protection Mandate	UN Human Rights Mechanisms
DECLARED COMPLEX EMERGENCY	Afghanistan	Asia		X	X	X	X		X
	Angola	Africa			X		X		
	Burundi	Africa		X		X	X		X
	Liberia	Africa		X			X		
	Russia	Europe		X		X		X	
	Somalia	Africa	X	X			X		X
	Sri Lanka	Asia			X				
NON-COMPLEX EMERGENCY	Colombia	Americas		X					
	Nigeria	Africa	X						
	Turkey	Europe	X		X				

\* Other protection allies, such as civil society groups and national and international NGOs are not categorised as it is assumed that in all of the countries listed such actors exist, albeit to varying degrees.

## C. A Joint Publication by the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement and the Unit

Based on the field research and appropriate desk studies a report will be prepared for publication by the Brookings-SAIS Project, outlining the major findings and recommendations of the Protection Survey. Specific effort will be made to complement previous research efforts on field protection activities or best practices such as the *IASC Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement* or *Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting Rights through Humanitarian Action; Programmes and Practices Gathered from the Field*, published by the IASC. Although the publication will rely on the results of the field research, it will not include the names of interviewed respondents or other specific country information in those cases where such disclosure could jeopardize the work of country teams or undermine OCHA's or the RSG's work.

#### **D. Timeline**

Both institutional partners have contributed one short-term staff person/consultant to implement the Protection Survey, including designing and implementing a research agenda and delivering a written product suitable for publication.

##### ***Phase One (Starting Mid Oct 2002)***

Preparation of research methodology including design of questionnaire  
Consultation with members of protection coalition and other relevant actors  
Identification of countries

##### ***Phase Two (Nov 1, 2002 – April 1, 2003)***

Field visits  
Preparation of initial country reports and research  
Initial analysis and revisions of methodology as required

##### ***Phase Three (April 2003)***

Preparation of public report  
Drafting recommendations  
Presentation of general report and recommendations to conference for discussion

##### ***Phase Four (May 1, 2003)***

Publication  
Launch ceremony

#### **III. Expected Outcomes**

##### **A. Protection Templates**

As indicated above, the aim of the Survey is essentially to provide an overview of existing protection approaches/arrangements with a view to identifying those which work effectively and which might be usefully emulated elsewhere. It will also aim to better understand the problems that impede protection efforts and examine and outline the ways in which these might be overcome.

On the basis of these more general aims, the Survey will develop “protection templates” – that is to say, to outline the different components which are essential to the development and implementation of an effective protection strategy for internally displaced persons at the field level and which can be adapted to a given country context.

##### **B. Advocacy Campaign**

An advocacy campaign will be based on the conclusions of the Survey and will seek to involve institutional partners of the Unit in promoting its recommendations for enhanced protection. A variety of activities will be undertaken including conferences and workshops with a wide cross section of institutional audiences including all IASC members and international and local NGOs. Part of the advocacy campaign may also include activities designed to raise awareness of the general public on the everyday challenges of protecting internally displaced persons.

#### **IV. IASC Action Points**

The success of the Protection Survey will depend to a large extent on the cooperation of HCs/RCs, UN country teams and NGOs.

To this end, the IASC-WG is requested to:

- Endorse the undertaking of the Protection Survey as a valuable initiative towards promoting an enhanced response to the protection of internally displaced persons.
- Request individual members of the IASC-WG to advise their headquarters and field offices of the plans to undertake the Survey and to request their full support for and cooperation with the Survey team.